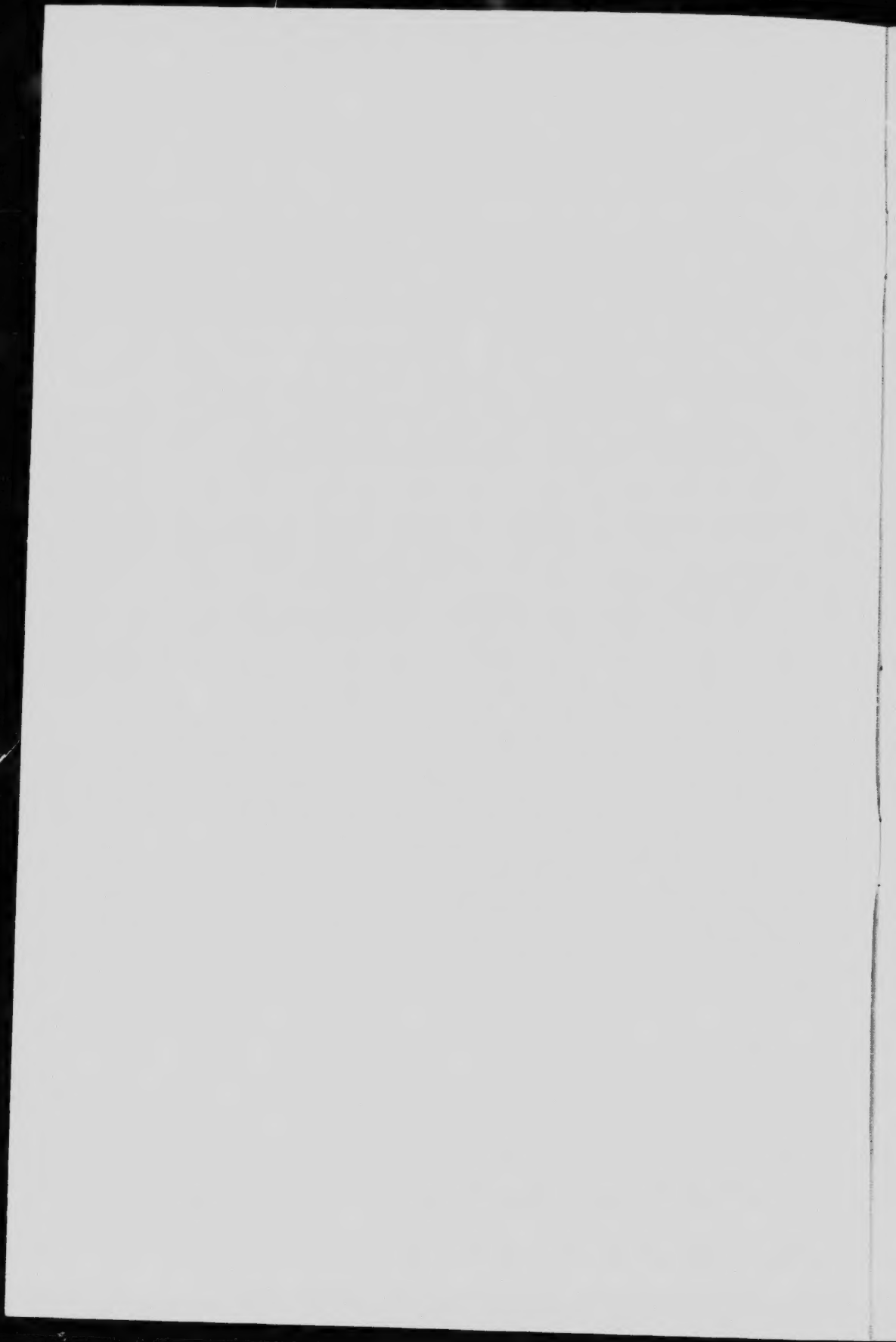




(November 11th, 1912.)

Standards.

BY HON. S. H. BLAKE, K.C.*

At a regular luncheon of the Club on the 11th Nov., Hon. S. H. Blake said:

I was asked most kindly by your President and the Secretary to speak some afternoon to the Canadian Club. I received from him the statement that I might speak on any subject that I pleased, and say what was pleasing to myself. I mentioned that to a friend of mine, and he said, "The Chairman might as well have given you the permission, for you would have taken it anyway." That shows how unkind and untruthful people may be!

I said that I would like to give a little talk—if I even desired it I am not an eloquent man, and I have lived long enough to endorse the statement made by a friend of mine yesterday, who went to hear a celebrated divine, an eloquent man, and I said, "What did he talk about?" "Well," he said, "I really don't know; I was so carried away with the language." "But," I said, "can you not give me the text?" "I can't," said he. "Well," I said, "what was the sermon about?" "Really, I don't know," he replied, "all I can say is, it was an eloquent sermon." Now, I am beginning to have very much the same idea of eloquence, and I say, even if I could be eloquent, I think it would be unwise, because I desire to give a serious talk this afternoon.

You will permit me to say, Mr. Chairman, before I commence, that I began to think when outside that it was Indian summer, it was so beautiful but was just a little doubtful until I came in here and found, from the smoke, that it certainly is Indian summer! (Laughter.)

About seventy years ago, a junior partner of one of those counsel that used to delight the audience attending a jury trial, said to me, "Do you know, that when the leading counsel

*Hon. Samuel Hume Blake, K.C., is too well known to Canadians to require any lengthy biographical note. A leader of the Provincial Bar, he was formerly Vice-Chancellor of Ontario and a Governor of the University of Toronto. He is a strong Evangelical, and has long been noted for his activity in evangelical movements and for his quiet benevolence in connection with many good causes.

on the other side in his address got up and quietly made his way over to the jury box, the other counsel would whisper to me, 'There's that fellow going to *talk* to the jury!' " He knew that he could get hold of them by just *talk*ing to them! 'The eloquence would be all gone, the meat or essence would not be found, and nothing but word., eloquent though they might be, would be left. I would like to have a little of the persuasive quality of that very celebrated lawyer, and have a little *talk* with the Canadian Club this afternoon.

It is a matter of vital moment to us to have true standards. We have standards for gold, and standards for silver, and standards for wheat, and standards for oats, and standards for butter, and standards for cheese. People that don't regard these standards find the way into the place whence there is no means of exit to them for some months. Now, if it be so necessary to have these standards for material matters, is it not a thousand-fold more necessary that we have standards for our life, the standards that will make the soul of the nation, the standards that will be the spring of action, the standards that will uplift, and not only uplift the individual who lives up to them, but also will uplift those that he touches. It should be a matter ever to be remembered by this Club,—that your duty does not begin and end with self, your duty is carried far beyond that, your influence should be felt by any person whose life you can mould, anyone who needs the good, honest grasp of a Canadian to lift him higher, and give him better and truer views of life. These, these are the aims and objects, I presume, of this Club. If not, Mr. Chairman, they should be made its aims and objects. (Applause.) Each one might and should in his place in our city do something to forward the great object of forming a nation, that is to take the standard of other lands?—by no means! We propose to set a standard that is higher than the standard of any nation, no matter how high that may be—untrammelled with old rules, with old regulations, and with old ideas; here, thank God! we are starting afresh in the race of life, here we are untrammelled by what may have preceded us, here we are a nation in the forming, with the possibility of setting such an ideal standard that people can look back and say, "Thank God for the Canadian Club! At a period of time when we are beginning to grow, it, a great and increasing band, undertook not merely to set standards, for many can do that in their studies—but to set high standards, and to live them, to be walking standards so that all might look and may follow." If that be the object it is a grand one, and we do not begin it with the stain

of the opium, the slave or any other like trade. We don't begin it with the sin of adding a little to our income by such means, for although the opium trade might add five million pounds sterling a year to Britain, it brought an incalculable curse to China and continued it there with the cost of two wars which she dragged cruelly out of the heathen nation in its struggle to avert this evil. What a marvellous contrast between the standard of heathen China and that of Christian England! One of the first acts of this heathen nation when, as she is, coming into her own is her edict, "No opium! Put this curse introduced by Christian England out of our land!" May we ever keep free from such black spots in our history and in our integrity valiantly proceed with the great work which is now entrusted to us.

How varied are the opinions of people upon the subject of standards. Not long since a man known in our city died, and some months ago a friend of mine came into my office and said, "They say So-and-so's life is a failure." "His life a failure? Man!" I said, "what is your standard?" The voice was loud, but only gave due expression to the deeply moved spirit. "Man, what is your standard? Didn't he live a pure life, and a true life, and an honest life, and an uplifting life? Did he not sacrifice self, and did he not seek only to do that which was for the welfare of others? He never went into the Town of Carnal Policy and there dwelt. Compromise and expediency were cast out of his dictionary. He never accompanied with Mr. Facing-both-ways, or lived in the same street with Mr. By-ends. He never struggled for place or for Position, or ran after that which the world is running after. Do you say that life is a failure? That life is a sacred heritage to the Canadian people?" That is a life the memory of which is to be handed down. The standard was four-square to the world. That is a life that we Canadians may well be proud of, and this Canadian Club may well seek to repeat it in many of its members, and through them in tens of thousands in our Dominion. (Applause.)

That life a failure! Give me for a moment of time an opportunity of presenting a vision. When the supreme day comes when we shall all have to stand before the great Judge, and when on His throne He sits, I can see Him beckoning to the man whose life was a 'failure'—to sit up on the throne beside Him. I can hear Him say, "Come up, my son, and help me to judge those men who thought your life and mine were failures." And as He stretches out that hand I can see in it the stigmas of the nails that entered into it, driven in

by the world that said His life also, was a failure. It was too high a life for the world to understand. "Come up and help me to judge those who thought that your life and my life was a failure."

I want to set before you this afternoon no lower standard than that! I want that you shall not seek to live a life on any lower standard. And I want you to seek, in season and out of season, to impress upon people that the life of truth, the life of honesty, the life of uprightness, the life of integrity, and the life of sacrifice for others, is not a failure, but it is the grand standard of life, to be followed and to be cherished.

They say I am a fossil. (Laughter.) Mr. President, if what I say proves me a fossil, thank God that I am placed in that splendid category! But, being a fossil, let me call back just a few of those matters that make me a fossil. A person said, "I wish you would give me a few reminiscences." One of the—I am not going to give them, so the old people here need not be alarmed! (Laughter and applause)—but one of the earliest pictures before my mind is the Hon. Robert Baldwin. He lived very nearly opposite to us, and as he constantly walked in his integrity and in his uprightness past the window at which I was studying my lessons, I said, "I would like to live a life as true and as upright as the life of that man!" And let me tell you, Mr. Chairman, that one of the great wants of the young men of to-day, and one of the reasons why I impress it with all my force and power this afternoon, is that they look almost in vain for such manly men to-day. Don't let the standard deteriorate! Start here such a standard, and see that it is lived! We had in our youth the enormous advantage of people of that class, we touched those hands, we heard their voices, we viewed their lives, we got their advice, and we learned from them, that for ourselves, for our true happiness, for our country, and for the general good, there was to be an undeviating standard of integrity and uprightness.

I remember how it struck me in reading Carlyle's History of Frederick the Great, when it came to the time of his deep anxiety as to who should be his successor on the throne, when he thought of the difficulties that he had had, and of the greater difficulties, that with his vision he saw coming, he determined that he must have a ruler with strength of character, a man with nobility of mind and ready in action. He took much pains with the education of his two nephews, one of whom he determined should be the king after him. One

day, passing through the school room, he found there the lad, afterwards King Frederick William. He was very anxious that he should be a proficient scholar in French—you know the language here, I think (Laugh)—in French, simply because it was the diplomatic language of those days. Taking down Lafontaine's Fables, he said to the boy, "Translate me that fable." He did it excellently well; and the King putting his hand on the boy's shoulder, commended him for the progress he was making. The lad said to him, "Sire, I think it but right to say, I should not have been able to translate it so well but that I had it for my lesson yesterday." That is the class of boy no doubt you are bringing up in our ordinary schools! I will give you five dollars for every such boy to-day! Frederick William years after said, "I never will forget the hand put on my shoulder and around me as he commended my truthfulness, and commended my honesty, in not bearing away the meed of praise that I had not earned. He took me out in front of the Potsdam Palace, where there was a great obelisk, and continuing to commend me, said, speaking in French" (we are not all educated up to that, Mr. Chairman), "speaking French, he pointed to the great monolith and said, 'Sa droiteur fait sa force! Its uprightness is its strength.' And still insisting on that attitude of absolute uprightness even on the throne, and amidst all circumstances, we walked up and down on the terrace." Frederick William said, "Many a time after that, filled with trouble and threatened with attacks on my Kingdom, as surrounding nations offered me help and assistance on degrading terms, I walked up and down in front of the Potsdam Palace, and thinking of my old uncle and his early lesson 'Sa droiteur fait sa force' I said, *ma droiteur fait ma force*—Let that be my strength! And let me reject any course of action and any offered friendship which involves a sacrifice of right."

Suffer another illustration. I was very much struck with it. A man, in dealing with the question of standards, took out his watch on the platform, and said to one of the audience, "What's the hour by your watch?" We will call it "Ten minutes to two." To another, "By yours?" "Five minutes to two." "By yours?" "Two o'clock." Now if I go down the whole of Broadway, and set my watch by the time of every man that I meet,—what would be the result of it? I'll ruin my watch, and I won't have the right time at the end of it. But, that's what you in this Assembly Hall are doing in your daily lives; *you* are setting your conduct by that man that has been a little longer in business than you, and *you* are setting

your conduct by him that is alongside of you; *you* are justifying yourself because *he* did it, or because another did it, and if he is a man that is especially looked up to, then all the more I am completely shielded by what *he* does. If I want to set my watch, I go to the sun: there I get the true time, and I set my watch by it! And you, if you want to get your standard, go you to that sun intended to guide the world, go to your Bible, and thereby set your conduct, and by nothing lower! That Bible, which from Genesis to Revelation is full of righteousness, thinking right, talking right, doing right, amidst all the never-to-be-depended upon and ever-changing standards of the world! Let this Canadian Club write that word in letters so large that it can be seen from one end of Canada to the other, **RIGHTEOUSNESS** is the standard that we must have, and we begin it by living it ourselves.

One more little anecdote. I feel the chairman pulling the tail of my coat,—if he were in Ireland he dare not do that!—but I want to give you two thoughts in connection with this, and I want you to bear them away with you. A lad was passing over a canal on an early June day, and he had over his shoulder a stick, on which *he* suspended his belongings. A man said to him, an old teamster on the canal—mark, an old teamster on the canal—"Well, William, where are you going?" The lad replied, "You know, sir, the family is getting large, and the business is not increasing, and I have got to go out into the world, and I have to do 'or myself." "Well," he said, "William, what business are you going into?" He said, "You know, father had the little soap factory down there near the canal; and soap making is the only thing that I know anything about, and I suppose I must go up to Philadelphia and try to make my way there." "Well," says this—I emphasize it—*old teamster*, "William, take two thoughts from me into your work: one is, make the very best article that you can, no shame, no pretences, no 'This-is-as-good-as-that'—make, William, the best article that you can; and my second is, give every man that you deal with sixteen ounces to the pound." And William said, "I plodded along, and those thoughts came working in my mind, and I resolved they shall be the mottoes of William Colgate." And at a time when he could write his name to a cheque for millions of dollars, he stood on the platform saying: "William Colgate's success has been based on doing the very best that he could, and on giving every man I dealt with sixteen ounces to the pound."

The question is not whether you will probably be found out in your wrong; it is not a question of making a little more or less money; but it is the injury that you do to yourselves, the self-weakening that is inflicted by dropping down to the low level of doing a mean or dishonourable action. You are weakening yourselves, your self-respect. Markino, the Japanese artist, who came to study in London, Paris, Vienna, and San Francisco, and who went many days without a meal, working and toiling as an artist, wrote back to his friends words I think it worth while for any young man to read. He stated, that of all the people he had met he liked the English best, but he made one qualification in his likings: while commending their kindness shown in many actions, "There was one thing," he said, "that I did not find in the English people (and to a Japanese ancestor-worshipper it was a great omission,) I did not find the quality of *bushito*,"—doing right because it is right, doing right because of the respect that you owe to yourself, doing right because of your ancestors, doing right because of your name, immaterial whether any man sees or finds it out, immaterial who may be there. *Bushito!* Do the right because it is the right! Do the right! *Sa droiteur fait sa force!* It is an amazing thing to me, now in my seventy-eighth year, to look back over so many people that have made dead failures, because to them there was no *bushito* standard. The men who succeeded and whose children are succeeding, were those who lived the high motto "*noblesse oblige*."

Just one little instance of that. A friend of mine many years ago said to me, going into his large wholesale warehouse: Last week a man came in here to deal with me. One of my salesmen came up and said, "Blank is buying a large parcel, sir." "Indeed," said I, "Blank! I think I know that name. Go down to the bookkeeper and bring me up the full name and address of that man," and he did. "Why," I said to the salesman, "that is the man that cheated us; that's the man that made the bad failure; that's the man that dishonestly left his creditors with a few cents on the dollar! Go down and tell the buyer not to serve him!" The buyer came up, and he said: "Why, sir, the parcel is very large, and he is going to pay cash for it." "Never put one dollar of his money into my establishment! Put all those goods back into their places, and tell him we don't deal with such men." My friend hadn't what they call "the yellow itch." (Laughter.) He gave a lesson to that man when he taught him "There is something better than money, it is character, and it goes farther. I will not soil myself by allowing such men to come in and deal in my establishment."

This merchant died a man of wealth. He was true to the true standard. He died honored. He died a Senator of the Dominion—don't mistake me! I am not saying that this is a never failing certificate of character. (Laughter.) But he died respected by all and loved by many; and he died living his standard. "Sa droiteur fait sa force."

I thank you. I have given about one-quarter of what I intended, but I have been led away here and there, and I must now close. I desire, however, to say this, that if you do me the honor of electing me a member of this Club I shall be very glad to join. (Applause.) I am not depreciating at all, of course—I put it first, the place it should occupy—the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society. (Laughter.) Some man will say St. Andrew's Society stands first—let him have it. Some St. George's Society—very well. But I would like to see a strong, national, Canadian Club, that knows no nationality except as we Canadians are a nation, with our own standard of patriotism, of right, of kindness, of consideration for others, endeavoring to have that standard raised throughout the whole of this land, giving way to no standard of any other nation or people, but setting above all their standards the Canadian standard. No body of people should have more to do with forming, preserving, and living this standard than the Canadian Club of Canada. (Long applause.)
